United Nations A/72/93

General Assembly

Distr.: General
1 July 2017

Original: English

Seventy-second session
Item 29 of the preliminary list*
Advancement of women

Status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/131 on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its seventy-second session a report on the status of the Convention. It covers the period from 2 July 2015 to 1 July 2017.

* A/72/50.

17-09958 (E) 200617

Please recycle

I. Status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

1. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 34/180. It was opened for signature, subject to ratification, and for accession at United Nations Headquarters on 1 March 1980 and, in accordance with article 27 of the Convention, entered into force on 3 September 1981.

2. As at 1 July 2017, 189 States had ratified, acceded to or succeeded to the Convention, which represents no change since the submission of the previous report (A/70/124). The list of States parties to the Convention and the dates of deposit of their instruments of ratification, accession or succession to the Convention are available from the website of the Treaty Section of the Office of Legal Affairs (http://treaties.un.org), along with all declarations, reservations, objections and other relevant information.

3. As at 1 July 2017, 71 States parties had deposited with the Secretary-General instruments of acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, which relates to the meeting time of the Committee. The State parties having accepted the amendment since the submission of the previous report are Sri Lanka and Belgium. The list of States that have accepted the amendment to article 20 of the Convention and the dates of deposit of their instruments of acceptance are available on the website of the Treaty Section.

4. During the reporting period, no objections to reservations were received; and Bahrain modified its reservations to articles 2, 15 (4) and 16 (C.N.578.2016); the Democratic People's Republic of Korea withdrew its reservations to articles 2 (f) and 9 (2) (C.N.631.2015); Singapore partially withdrew its reservation to article 11 (C.N.543.2015); and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland extended the territorial application of the Convention to Saint Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha (C.N.128.2017), to Anguilla and the Cayman Islands (C.N.97.2016) and to Bermuda (C.N.127.2017) and made additional reservations to article 15 (4) on behalf of the territories of the Cayman Islands (C.N.97.2016) and Bermuda (C.N.127.2017). The above depositary notifications are available from the website of the Office of Legal Affairs for reference.

II. Status of the Optional Protocol to the Convention

5. By its resolution 54/4, the General Assembly adopted the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Optional Protocol was opened for signature, subject to ratification and accession, at United Nations Headquarters on 10 December 1999 and, in accordance with article 16, paragraph 1, of the Optional Protocol, entered into force on 22 December 2000.

6. As at 1 July 2017, 109 States parties had ratified, acceded to or succeeded to the Optional Protocol. This represents an increase of three States parties since the submission of the previous report. The three States parties were: Monaco, on 3 May 2016; the Central African Republic, on 11 October 2016; and Sao Tome and Principe, on 23 March 2017. The list of States parties to the Optional Protocol, the dates of deposit of their instruments of ratification, accession or succession, and all declarations, reservations and other relevant information are also available from the website of the Treaty Section.

III. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

A. Substantive and technical servicing

7. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has responsibility for supporting the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The Committee is serviced by the secretariat of the Committee, which comprises the Secretary (P-4), four Human Rights Officers (P-3), one Junior Professional Officer (JPO) and one Assistant (General Service).

8. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has ensured that the strong links between the Committee and the intergovernmental machinery responsible for the promotion of gender equality continue to be maintained. The previous and current Chairs of the Committee participated in the sixtieth and sixty-first sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women, in 2016 and 2017. The then Chair also addressed the Third Committee of the General Assembly at its seventieth and seventy-first sessions. The Committee's interaction with the United Nations human rights machinery is extremely important for its overall activities, and the Committee benefits greatly from the cooperation of the relevant stakeholders to effectively discharge its mandate.

9. The Committee regularly discusses issues of common concern with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). On 12 and 19 November 2015, the Committee was briefed by videoconference by the Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director of the Intergovernmental Support and Strategic Partnerships Bureau of UN-Women, Lakshmi Puri, and on 14 and 15 June 2016, a Committee member participated in an expert meeting organized by UN-Women on monitoring indicator 5.1.1 of the global Sustainable Development Goals indicators (see E/CN.3/2017/2, annex III) relating to legal frameworks to end discrimination against women. The Committee continues to collaborate with UN-Women on the follow-up to and review of target 5.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals and has started to include systematic references to Sustainable Development Goals and targets in its lists of issues and questions, constructive dialogues with States parties and concluding observations. UN-Women is providing support to the Committee in reviewing its reporting guidelines in the light of the Sustainable Development Goals.

10. The Committee has met with the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights and other senior staff, and has welcomed opportunities for discussion with relevant divisions, branches and sections on issues relevant to the work of the Committee.

11. The Committee meets regularly with special procedures mandate holders, including, during the reporting period, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences and the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice, as well as with the Chair of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

12. On 17 November 2016, the Committee held an informal meeting with the States parties to the Convention, which was attended by 71 States parties. The Committee briefed the States parties on the implementation of the Convention and the Optional Protocol in the context of General Assembly resolution 68/268 on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system, its engagement with UN-Women on indicator 5.1.1 of the global

Sustainable Development Goals indicators and its recent work on draft general recommendations.

13. The Committee continued to contribute actively to the work of the human rights treaty bodies, especially within the framework of the annual meetings of Chairs of treaty bodies. The Chair participated in the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth meetings of the Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies, which were convened from 30 May to 3 June 2016 and from 26 to 30 June 2017 in New York. During the twenty-eighth meeting, the Chair of the Committee participated in discussions on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/268, in particular regarding the role of the Chairs in taking decisions on procedural matters and working methods, the need for the treaty bodies and OHCHR to have the material and human resources necessary for the treaty bodies to perform their work, the implementation of the guidelines on the independence and impartiality of members of the human rights treaty bodies and of the guidelines against intimidation or reprisals and the engagement of treaty bodies with national human rights institutions. The Chair also participated in informal consultations with States parties regarding General Assembly resolution 68/268, as well as informal consultations with the Inter-American human rights mechanisms, United Nations entities and specialized agencies, civil society organizations and the International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions. During the twenty-ninth meeting of the Chairs, the Chair of the Committee participated in discussions on similar and additional items, such as: the report of the Secretary-General on the status of the human rights treaty body system (A/71/118) submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 68/268; the development of a common approach to engaging with national human rights institutions; strategies to enhance the visibility of the treaty body system; and treaty bodies and the Sustainable Development Goals. She also participated in consultations with States parties, United Nations entities and specialized agencies, national human rights institutions and civil society organizations.

14. Committee members participated in panel discussions organized by various stakeholders.

15. During the reporting period, the Committee held a general discussion on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction and climate change. The discussion was organized by OHCHR on 29 February 2016, with support from the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and the Geneva office of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, as part of the first phase in the development of a general recommendation on the topic. It was attended by a number of States parties, United Nations entities and specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations and included as speakers the current and the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction; the Assistant Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization; an academic expert on earthquake disasters and gender from Japan; a public policy expert on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation from Trinidad and Tobago; and a representative of CARE Bangladesh.

16. On 19 November 2015, the Committee convened a panel discussion on the topic "Connecting the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the women and peace and security agenda", organized by OHCHR in collaboration with the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland and the treaty body platform of the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, to mark the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security and to underline the importance of the Committee's general recommendation No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and

post-conflict situations in that context. The panellists included the then Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, a member of the Syrian Women's League, the Vice-Director of the Directorate of International Law of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland and the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights. A large number of States parties, United Nations entities and specialized agencies, international and regional organizations and non-governmental organizations attended the event.

17. With a view to further enhancing and harmonizing its working methods with other treaty bodies, and in line with General Assembly resolution 68/268, the Committee took note of the guidelines against intimidation or reprisals ("San José guidelines"; HRI/MC/2015/6) endorsed by the twenty-seventh meeting of Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies, held in San José, from 22 to 26 June 2015, and decided that, pending further consideration, its Bureau would continue to act as focal point for intimidation or reprisals. The Committee adopted the elements for the elaboration of and consultations on general comments endorsed by the twenty-seventh meeting of Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies (see A/70/302, para. 91 (a) to (h)) with minor reservations. It decided to introduce a new standard paragraph on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, revise several standard paragraphs and subheadings and use uniform language for concerns and recommendations in its concluding observations on State party reports; further strengthen the role of country rapporteurs, continue to operate in country task forces and enhance the structure of its constructive dialogues with States parties; and revise its treaty-specific reporting guidelines in the light of the Sustainable Development Goals. It reviewed two States parties under the new simplified reporting procedure during the reporting period, but decided to suspend the application of that procedure[1] pending an assessment of its effectiveness. It decided to hold its biennial informal meetings with the States parties to the Convention as public meetings with live webcasting.

B. Evaluation by the Committee

18. As at 1 July 2017, there are 11 States parties with long-overdue reports (more than five years overdue). Two of the States parties that have not yet submitted their long-overdue reports, Antigua and Barbuda and Saint Kitts and Nevis, have been listed to be considered by the Committee in the absence of their reports. The Committee also continues to send reminders to States parties with overdue reports. In the light of the additional meeting time allocated to the Committee under General Assembly resolution 68/268, it now schedules the reports of 28 States parties for review per year and has scheduled 36 States parties to be considered at its sixty-seventh session (July 2017), sixty-eighth session (October and November 2017), sixty-ninth session (February and March 2018) and seventieth session (July 2018). Six reports have not yet been formally scheduled. The Committee notes that it has been able to slightly reduce its backlog and considers that the consideration of combined reports assists greatly in keeping the backlog in check. Most reports submitted consist of combined reports.

19. The Committee is gratified that it continues to attract a wide following within the United Nations system and civil society, including national human rights

[1] The prior decision of the Committee to consider the following States parties under the simplified reporting procedure remains unimpaired: Romania (combined seventh to ninth periodic reports), Israel (sixth periodic report), Luxembourg (combined sixth and seventh periodic reports), Liechtenstein (fifth periodic report), Mauritius (eighth periodic report) and Bulgaria (eighth periodic report).

institutions and non-governmental organizations, and that it has been able to interact with the wider human rights framework, including the special procedures mandate holders and other treaty bodies. Its transfer to OHCHR and the holding of its sessions in Geneva have enabled the Committee to develop close relationships with Geneva-based United Nations entities and specialized agencies, as well as with other bodies, such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

20. The Committee considers that it has continued to make efforts to harmonize its practices with those of other treaty bodies. It also considers that its follow-up procedure, which is similar to that of other treaty bodies, has strengthened implementation at the national level.

Fulfilment by States parties of reporting obligations

21. Article 18, paragraph 1, of the Convention provides that States parties undertake to submit reports on the implementation of the Convention within one year after its entry into force for the State concerned and thereafter at least every four years and further whenever the Committee so requests.

22. Between 2 July 2015 and 1 July 2017, the Secretary-General received reports (many of which are combined reports) from the following States parties: Australia, Austria, the Bahamas, Barbados, Burkina Faso, Chile, the Congo, the Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Cyprus, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Fiji, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Kenya, Kuwait, Malaysia, the Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Montenegro, Nauru, Nepal, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Paraguay, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Suriname, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and the State of Palestine.

23. During the reporting period, the Committee held the following six sessions: sixty-first session, from 6 to 24 July 2015; sixty-second session, from 26 October to 20 November 2015; sixty-third session, from 15 February to 4 March 2016; sixty-fourth session, from 4 to 22 July 2016; sixty-fifth session, from 24 October to 18 November 2016; and sixty-sixth session, from 13 February to 3 March 2017. During those sessions, the Committee considered the reports of 54 States parties. The sixty-seventh session will be held from 3 to 21 July 2017, at which an additional eight reports will be considered by the Committee.

Reports awaiting consideration, overdue reports and requests for follow-up reports

24. A total of 42 reports submitted by States parties have yet to be considered by the Committee, 36 of which have been scheduled to be considered at sessions of the Committee to be held between July 2017 and July 2018 (see para. 18). Six reports received have not yet been formally scheduled.

25. In the light of the reduced backlog of reports awaiting consideration, the Committee initiated a systematic effort to encourage States parties to submit long-overdue reports. On the basis of its decisions 29/I and 31/III (i), it established that it would proceed with consideration of the implementation of the Convention in the absence of a report only as a last resort and in the presence of a delegation. The Committee continued its practice of inviting States parties with long-overdue reports to submit all their overdue reports as a combined report.

26. Currently, the following States parties have not yet submitted their initial reports: Dominica, Kiribati, San Marino and Sao Tome and Principe.

27. Reports that were due in June 2012 or before include those from: Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Dominica, Kiribati, Latvia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, San Marino and Sao Tome and Principe.

28. Reports that were due between July 2012 and June 2017 include those from: Algeria, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chad, the Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Grenada, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Indonesia, Jamaica, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Malta, Morocco, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, South Africa, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

C. Working methods of the Committee

29. Taking into account the word limits for treaty body documentation established in General Assembly resolution 68/268, the Committee's report to the Assembly no longer includes the concluding observations on the reports of States parties, the decisions on communications and general recommendations of the Committee or the reports of the Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol to the Convention; those are published as separate documents and are posted on the website of OHCHR.

30. The Committee has continued to convene its pre-session working group two sessions in advance of the consideration of a report to ensure that States parties have enough time to respond to their respective lists of issues and questions.

31. The Committee, in the last paragraph of its concluding observations, establishes the due date for the State party's next periodic report. In cases where the next periodic report is overdue or becomes due within one or two years of the date of consideration, the Committee requests the State party to submit its next report as a combined periodic report. Most reports considered by the Committee are now combined reports.

32. During the reporting period, the Committee focused on ensuring that the concluding observations on the reports of States parties were more concise, targeted, country-specific and precise, so that they could be implemented more effectively at the national level. It should be recalled that, at its forty-first session, the Committee decided to adopt the practice of inserting titles (subject headings) in its concluding observations, and agreed on a list of titles which would be applied flexibly and as appropriate for the State party concerned (A/63/38, part two, annex X). At its sixty-second and sixty-third sessions, the Committee decided to shorten several standard paragraphs contained in its concluding observations.

33. At its forty-first session, the Committee decided to introduce a follow-up procedure whereby it would include a request to individual States parties in the concluding observations for information on steps taken to implement specific recommendations. At its forty-fourth session, the Committee decided to appoint a rapporteur on follow-up to concluding observations and an alternate. It is noted that a maximum of two recommendations are identified for follow-up. The criteria for the selection of follow-up recommendations are that the concerns addressed in those recommendations constitute a major obstacle to the enjoyment by women of their rights and thus to the implementation of the Convention as a whole and that their implementation would be feasible within the suggested time frame. The follow-up report is also made public and is available on the website of OHCHR. The follow-up rapporteur collaborates with the country rapporteur on the assessment of the follow-up report. The rapporteur reports to the Committee at each session, and that report is included in the Committee's report to the General Assembly. At its forty-seventh session, the Committee decided to include follow-up to concluding observations as

a standing item on the agenda. At its fifty-fourth session, the Committee updated its methodology on the follow-up procedure to concluding observations and adopted an information note on the follow-up procedure for different stakeholders (see A/67/38, part three, annex III and appendix). At its sixty-second session, the Committee decided that the length of written information from States parties on follow-up to concluding observations must not exceed 4,000 words (see A/71/38, part two, decision 62/V). At its sixty-fifth session, it decided that the use of the follow-up procedure should be continued and that another assessment should be made at the seventy-first session of the Committee, to be held in October and November 2018 (see A/72/38, part two, para. 20). The Committee also appointed a new rapporteur on follow-up as well as an alternate, each for a two-year term.

34. The Committee continued its interaction with the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system that contribute to its work and support the full implementation of the Convention at the national level. It continued to receive joint information submitted by United Nations country teams regarding States parties under consideration by the Committee, and encouraged the entities of the United Nations system to undertake follow-up activities on the basis of the Committee's concluding observations at the country level.

35. The Committee continued its practice of meeting informally with non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions wishing to present country-specific information on States parties whose reports were before it, at the beginning of the first, second and, in the case of four-week sessions, third weeks of the session. The Committee's pre-session working group also provided opportunities for non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions to present written and oral information. General and session-specific information notes for non-governmental organizations and national human rights institutions are regularly posted on the website of OHCHR.

36. The Committee continued to emphasize the important role of parliamentarians in the implementation of the Convention and the follow-up to concluding observations and includes a standard paragraph on the role of parliaments in each observation. The Inter-Parliamentary Union regularly submits information on the representation of women in the parliaments of the States parties under consideration and organizes regular capacity-building sessions for parliamentarians on the Convention and the Optional Protocol.

37. The Committee continued its practice of adopting statements on particular events or developments. Those include statements on the refugee crises and the protection of women and girls, adopted at its sixty-second session, and on the rights of rural women, adopted at its sixty-third session; a joint statement by human rights experts on International Women's Day, adopted shortly after its sixty-third session; and a joint statement by the Committee, the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, UN-Women and OHCHR entitled "Addressing gender dimensions in large-scale movements of refugees and migrants", adopted between its sixty-fourth and sixty-fifth sessions (all available from the website of OHCHR). The Committee also made written submissions to the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2016 and 2017 on the links between the Convention and the Sustainable Development Goals (also available from the website of OHCHR).

38. The Committee adopted general recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women at its sixty-third session (CEDAW/C/GC/34). The general recommendation on gender-based violence against women updating general recommendation No. 19 (1992) on violence against women is in the process of being finalized. With respect to the general recommendation on the right of women

and girls to education, a final draft has been prepared. In relation to the general recommendation on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in a changing climate, a first draft has been prepared and posted online for comments by external stakeholders.

D. Working methods with regard to the Optional Protocol

39. During the reporting period, the Committee continued to carry out its activities under the Optional Protocol to the Convention. The Committee normally allocates two meetings per session to matters relating to the Optional Protocol for consideration in plenary meeting.

40. The Committee's Working Group on Communications under the Optional Protocol held six sessions during the reporting period. The Working Group convenes three times a year for a total of 10 working days. To date, the Working Group has registered 118 communications, 25 of which were registered during the reporting period. Of the 118 communications, 45 remain open.

41. During the reporting period, the Committee adopted final decisions with regard to 20 communications. At its sixty-first session, held in July 2015, the Committee adopted views finding violations in relation to communications Nos. 24/2009 and 45/2012 and declared communications Nos. 50/2013 and 52/2013 inadmissible. At its sixty-second session, held in October and November 2015, the Committee adopted views finding a violation in relation to communication No. 53/2013 and declared communications Nos. 55/2013 and 56/2013 inadmissible. At its sixty-third session, held in February and March 2016, the Committee adopted views finding violations in relation to communications Nos. 46/2012 and 60/2013 and declared communication No. 62/2013 inadmissible. At its sixty-fourth session, held in July 2016, the Committee declared communications Nos. 57/2013, 64/2013 and 67/2014 inadmissible. At its sixty-fifth session, held in October and November 2016, the Committee adopted views finding a violation in relation to communication No. 66/2014 and declared communications Nos. 61/2013, 71/2014 and 74/2014 inadmissible. At its sixty-sixth session, held in February and March 2017, the Committee adopted views finding a violation in relation to communication No. 58/2013 and declared communications Nos. 54/2013 and 69/2014 inadmissible.

42. During the reporting period, the Committee and its Working Group on Communications continued to examine information, under its procedure on follow-up to views, in relation to 15 views concerning 13 States parties: Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, Georgia, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands, Peru, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Spain and the United Republic of Tanzania. During the same period, the Committee decided to close the follow-up dialogue with a finding of partially satisfactory resolution in relation to its views on communication No. 28/2010 concerning Turkey and with a finding of satisfactory resolution in relation to its views on communications Nos. 20/2008, 31/2011 and 32/2011 concerning Bulgaria and No. 53/2013 concerning Denmark.

43. The Committee's newly established Working Group on Inquiries under the Optional Protocol held six sessions during the reporting period. The Working Group convenes three times a year for a total of six working days. During the reporting period, two submissions under article 8 of the Optional Protocol requesting inquiries were received by the Committee and registered by the secretariat pursuant to the rules of procedure of the Committee. There are currently four inquiries pending with the Committee, as well as six submissions under article 8 of the Optional Protocol in relation to which no decision has yet been taken by the Committee on whether to conduct an inquiry. The members designated by the Committee to conduct inquiries

Nos. 2011/2 and 2014/1 undertook visits to the territory of the States parties concerned during the reporting period.

IV. Efforts to encourage universal ratification of the Convention and its Optional Protocol, and acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention

44. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women continue to encourage universal ratification of the Convention and the Optional Protocol and promote acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, which stipulates the meeting time allocated to the Committee. They have encouraged related action in their meetings with delegations, in statements and presentations at United Nations Headquarters, at other duty stations, and at conferences and other forums.

V. Technical assistance provided to States parties

45. Technical assistance and capacity-building activities of OHCHR routinely focus on the Convention, including with respect to the preparation of reports and follow-up to concluding observations, as well as the mechanisms established under the Optional Protocol. During the reporting period, OHCHR significantly increased its capacity-building for treaty reporting, thanks to additional resources from the United Nations regular budget allocated under General Assembly resolution 68/268. A number of States benefited from training workshops related to preparing their reports on the implementation of the Convention or to preparing for the constructive dialogue with the Committee. UN-Women also continued to organize training seminars on the Convention in a number of countries, which benefited from the contributions of experts of the Committee and involved not only Government officials but also other stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations. Capacity-building is considered to be vital to assist States parties in the implementation of their treaty obligations.

VI. Dissemination of the Convention, its Optional Protocol and information on the work of the Committee

46. OHCHR has redesigned and improved the page on the Convention and its Optional Protocol and the work of the Committee on its website (http://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/cedaw/pages/cedawindex.aspx). The text of the Convention and its Optional Protocol, reports of States parties, lists of issues and questions, including lists of issues prior to reporting, responses from States parties, States parties' introductory statements and the composition of delegations presenting reports, the Committee's concluding observations and documents and any other information concerning the Convention, its Optional Protocol, the working methods of the Committee and the meetings of States parties are posted on the website. The Universal Human Rights Index, the electronic research tool maintained by OHCHR that indexes concluding observations of human rights treaty bodies and recommendations of special procedures mandate holders, includes all lists of issues and concluding observations of the Committee.

VII. Conclusions and recommendations

47. The Committee has made significant efforts to reduce the delay between the submission of reports and their consideration, using more efficient working methods, including time management. Its efforts to encourage States parties to comply with their reporting obligations, especially where reports are long overdue, have been successful. It has enhanced its interaction with stakeholders in the implementation of the Convention, including through the increased use of videoconference technology, and has contributed to the common efforts of all treaty bodies to harmonize and strengthen the human rights treaty body system, in line with General Assembly resolution 68/268. The Committee has continued to develop its jurisprudence through its work under the Optional Protocol, including under the inquiry procedure, and its follow-up procedure in relation to views on individual communications finding violations has yielded positive, albeit modest, results. It has adopted one general recommendation, and three draft general recommendations are currently being prepared; one of them is nearing completion. The Committee organized one day of general discussion during the reporting period. The Committee has made its concluding observations more focused, country-specific and user-friendly. Follow-up to concluding observations has been mostly successful, although additional resources are required both for the Committee and the States concerned. Despite the Committee's achievements, further efforts are needed to encourage the implementation of the Convention at the national level.